

## **Sustainability 2007 – The Federal Government’s Perspective**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sustainable Development Strategies (SDS) rarely hit the headlines.

And this although: you all have been hard working – sometimes for years - to elaborate and start implementing sustainable development strategies.

Therefore I strongly welcome that this conference which brings together all the key European players – including administration, councils experts from different backgrounds - to exchange best practice and to discuss the further means for implementation and better linking the strategy to the political level.

While the Federal Chancellery leads on the national strategy on sustainable development, the coordination of the EU-strategy is in the hands of the Federal Foreign Office. It is an important horizontal issue which is dealt with in the General Affairs Council - that’s the reason why I’m speaking here now.

In my speech, I will try to tackle 3 questions from the perspective of the federal government:

- Where do we stand?
- What have we done under the EU- and G8-Presidency?
- What are the next steps on EU-level?

### **1. WHERE DO WE STAND?**

2007 – Where do we stand on international, EU, national, regional, local level?

We shouldn't forget that since 1987 we have got a general orientation from the Brundtland report – which is „sustainable development“. It might be a real monster for communication issues, but the importance lies in the values behind it: equity between and within generations, equality, justice, freedom, peace, respect of the limits of our earth.

**Thus we have a vision on how “our common future” should look like.**

**In the last 20 years we have built structures and processes to manage our policies in a more sustainable way.** We shouldn't overlook the time and energy we spent on all levels to define the main challenges, to decide on objectives and measures as well as on monitoring mechanisms.

### **On international level:**

..we had to accept – a month ago - that the UN-Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in its 15<sup>th</sup> session was unable to agree on an ambitious way forward regarding energy, climate and air quality. But the diverging interests of developing, emerging and two industrialised countries couldn't be overcome.

Doubts on the future of the CSD appear. Some criticise it as “marginal talking-shop”. But Mr. Gabriel, German Minister for the Environment and Commissioner Dimas strongly underlined that *“The European Union is convinced that the CSD is a unique forum to advance sustainable development at the global level. Sustainable development needs an integrated approach and the CSD is the right body to take this forward.”*

EU proposals for making progress on the multi-annual work-programme are necessary. Some initial thoughts have already been exchanged.

### **On EU-level**

..“sustainable development” became a fundamental objective of the EU when it was included in the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 as an overarching principle for EU policies.

Thanks to the excellent work of the Austrian Presidency - the European Council of June 2006 adopted an ambitious and comprehensive renewed SDS for an enlarged EU. It builds on the Gothenburg strategy of 2001.

**What is new?**

1. It is now one document - "the strategy" - on how the EU will meet its long-standing commitments to address the challenges of sustainable development.
2. It links the Lisbon- and Sustainable Development Strategies
3. It puts the need to change our current unsustainable consumption and production patterns among 6 other key challenges high on the agenda. (*the 7 key challenges: Climate change and clean energy, Sustainable transport, Sustainable production and consumption, Conservation and management of natural resources, Public health, Social inclusion, demography and migration, global partnership*)
4. It sets up a 2 year monitoring cycle and stresses the need of vertical integration, meaning better linkage between the EU- and national level.

### **This brings me to the German national strategy:**

The Rio- Agenda 21 required all governments to produce a national sustainable plan. Most EU-Member States have developed their national strategies or are on the way to do so. It is important that the national strategies vary in content and structure according to the particularities of each country.

The German national Strategy was presented 2002 at the world summit in Johannesburg.

Mr Rösgen, Federal Chancellery, has already outlined the main components of the strategy:

- the decision-making body "the **green-cabinet**" is chaired by the State Minister at the Federal Chancellery
- the **Council for Sustainable Development** advises and "pushes" the Federal Government
- the **Committee for Sustainable Development in Parliament** – the chairman, Dr. Krings spoke to you on Sunday evening about the role of this Committee.
- There are **21 goals and key indicators**, which show where we are on the road to sustainable development
- The third (after 2004 and 2005) **progress report is scheduled for 2008**. This report will not only focus on the **current key priorities**: i.e. climate change and energy, resources and demographic change but also follow up on the implementation of the overall strategy and the **recent report on the indicators**.

In Germany, the Länder are striving towards their own sustainable development strategies and 2603 local authorities are formally committed to the local Agenda 21 process – comprising a clear majority of the German population.

**To sum up on where we stand:**

We have a vision and we have structures and processes on international, EU and mostly on national level.

**It is now time for implementation!**

**2. WHAT HAVE WE DONE UNDER EU- AND G8-PRESIDENCY?**

As regards the **EU-presidency**, we didn't try to move on with the strategy in its entirety, but to focus on specific items. Yet, we apply the principles: vertical and horizontal integration and linking policies

**Energy and climate change was our key priority of the Spring European Council.**

Heads of State adopted a **European Energy Action Plan** with the three goals of security of supply, efficiency and environmental compatibility. The action plan is the first step towards an integrated energy and climate change policy.

The headline “historical agreement on climate protection” refers to the **3 times 20% objectives for 2020** for greenhouse gas emission reduction as unilateral commitment of the EU, increase in energy efficiency and the binding share of renewable energy in overall energy consumption and a binding **10% target on bio-fuels**.

In addition there is the commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by **30 % if** other industrialized countries adopt comparable goals and endorsed the reduction pathways for industrialised countries in the order of **30% by 2020 and 60-80% by 2050**.

Why is this important?

Ambitious, concrete and binding targets

- create credibility for international negotiations
- show the way forward to industry for investments in innovative energies
- give a clear signal for advanced scientific and technological development.

How ambitious are the targets?

At the beginning of 2007, the EU had only achieved 1.2% of its 8% reduction-target for greenhouse gas emissions. But - we have still 5 years to go until 2012. The big challenge is then to cut the emissions by a further 12% (EU=20%), or even 22% by 2020.

Vertical integration means to adapt and implement the goals on international and national level: On the basis of the EU-commitments we seized every occasion to show our determination on international level: preparatory G8-meetings, bilateral EU summits, CSD. But there is still a lot of confidence building, lobbying, negotiation and patience needed to prepare for post-Kyoto negotiations to be launched in December 2007 in Bali.

At the same time we have to underline our EU leading role by implementing and taking actions on national level. The first difficult step is to decide within the EU: "What contribution to the overall goal is each MS going to make?" [Who is doing how much?]"

As regards Germany, we are not far from our national reduction target of 21% by 2012, although CO<sub>2</sub> recently went into the wrong direction. Nevertheless, in April, Minister Gabriel, presented a first orientation of what the Spring European Council objectives imply for Germany. He said: "**it is nothing less than the reconstruction of the industrial sector. The time of business as usual is over!**" and presented an eight-point action plan, which will be further elaborated in a national climate action plan.

Horizontal integration:

In order to achieve the ambitious targets we have to integrate them into other policies: research, technology, education and last, not least consumer policy and awareness. Under the EU-Presidency Germany has held a number of informal meetings of ministers and conferences tackling sustainable development and climate change from different angles.

- "Environment, Innovation, Employment" was the title of the **informal meeting of EU environment ministers in Essen** on 1-3 June, which was meant to pave the way on eco-innovation. The results will be part of the Environment Council Conclusions. The meeting was accompanied by an exhibition "ECOTECH" aiming at pushing the development of new technologies for mobility, water management,

life cycle management and in the renewable energy sector.

- More than 700 experts from politics, science and industry attended the conference **“From Lisbon to Leipzig”**. The motto was **“Research for sustainability provides the basis for clean technologies and contributes to preserving the natural resources which are vital for future generations.** Germany is currently [in this legislative period] investing 1.2 billion € in sustainability research; of which 255 Mio. € is earmarked for climate change research.  
Another conference focused on the **UN-Decade Education for Sustainable Development**. Education encourages changes in behaviour.
- **At the informal meeting of ministers for urban development at the end of May**, ministers signed a **“Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities”**. For the first time, common principles for an integrated urban development policy were agreed. The Charter tackles the impact of demographic change, climate change and global economic structural change.
- **Linking policies** was the overall objective of the **Conference on “Environment- Development- and Conflict Prevention”**. The intention was to draw up recommendations for action addressed to EU institutions, with a view to better mainstreaming environment and security in the various strategies and policies of the EU. Security analyses have identified environmental damage – such as climate change – as a cause for concern which it can exacerbate or even cause tensions. UK put the topic on the agenda of the UN-Security-Council. Tomorrow, the German Advisory Council on Global Change will present the report **“Security Risk - Climate Change”**.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Tomorrow** the G8-leaders will meet for their annual summit in Heiligendamm (Baltic resort).

„We aim to give globalisation a human face“, was the heading of the Chancellor’s speech when she informed parliamentarians about the **G8 agenda items** two weeks ago. The overarching motto of our G8-Presidency is **“growth and responsibility”**.

Germany wants to use its G8 Presidency to acknowledge the larger role of the emerging economies and to more closely integrate them into global governance. That's why Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa are once again invited to the G8's outreach at Heiligendamm.

In this context I would like to mention that for the **first time the “+5” (Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa) were invited to the preparatory meeting of the G8 –Environment Ministers** in order to make progress on the urgently needed international negotiations on environmental issues. **Biodiversity was top of the agenda.** The ministers agreed on the "Potsdam Initiative – Biological Diversity 2010". It comprises measures in the fields of science, industry, trade and financing as well as for the protection of the world's oceans. Ministers decided to launch a **global study** – along the lines of the Stern report – which analyses the economic significance of biodiversity - and agreed to **set up an international scientific panel** modelled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Germany will host the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which will take place in Bonn from 19 to 30 May 2008.

### **Coming back to the G8-summit:**

There are a number of focal points on the agenda, which are to be seen in the context of sustainable development. I only want to focus on the following three:

#### **1. Social Shaping of globalisation:**

The G8 countries bear a particularly large share of responsibility in handling the social effects of the globalization process. Important to note, that Ministers of labour and employment of the G8 nations met for the first time during the German Presidency in order to prepare this topic. Along with international experts, they discussed social and equitable globalisation.

The further development of social security systems, also in emerging economies, is important for shaping the rapid industrialization process in a manner that is socially responsible.

#### **2. Climate protection and energy efficiency**

The G8 Summit in Heiligendamm will seek to generate an impulse for a worldwide climate protection agreement for the time after 2012. The G8 topic "energy efficiency"

has the potential to bridge the differing international approaches. Alongside international climate protection negotiations, topics such as adaptation to climate change and the avoidance of de-forestation will be included in the G8 process.

We don't know yet, how far we will be able to make progress on this issue.

### **3. Africa**

Germany believes that official assistance and debt forgiveness will not alone suffice to help us attain the millennium development objectives in Africa. To do so, economic growth and investment, independent responsibility, and good governance in Africa are important prerequisites. We are decided to further promote market integration and cross-border infrastructure by providing extra support to the Regional Economic Communities to develop their institutional capacities. Germany wants to strengthen the reform partnership and reinforce at different levels the dialogue with the African partners. We will continue to support efforts of the African Union and African regional organisations to develop a sovereign African Security Architecture and to establish the African Standby Force in order to settle armed conflicts and enhance stability. We will assist our partner countries to develop and strengthen health systems to ensure that appropriate health care is available for all.

In the context of implementing previous commitments, Germany intends to start discussions on new financial sources - such as the money (to be) generated by auctioning of CO2 emission reduction certificates. [Änderungen von 400]

**The list of EU- and G8-activities on sustainable development is quite long; a number of little steps in the good direction, which need to be continued.**

### **3. WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS ON EU-LEVEL?**

We haven't yet celebrated the first anniversary of the renewed EU-SDS (ER 15./16. Juni 2006). But we are already in the middle of the first monitoring cycle.

When we think about the next steps we should remember the reason why we decided to launch the first monitoring cycle in 2007:

1. to keep up the momentum – since we postponed decisions such as the question on indicators.

2. the Lisbon-strategy will be reassessed by the Spring European Council in 2008. The idea was to provide a “sustainable” input by the European Council in December 2007 after stocktaking and finetuning of the EU-SDS.

The Commission will present its progress report in September 2007. On which issues should we focus when we discuss it in Council? From my side, I would like to raise 3 issues:

### **1. Lisbon- and EU-SDS**

The Stern-report might have changed the battle between environment and economy. It is not “either/or” any more - it clearly showed that climate change is an environmental and an economic problem which needs a common approach if it is to be tackled effectively.

We might not have the time now for deep discussions to make one strategy out of two. However, European Council in December 2007 should further integrate and link the two strategies.

### **2. Indicators**

The question of including indicators was postponed. As required, the EUROSTAT working group has reviewed the set of SD-indicators. It is now, again, up to Council to decide on the endorsement of 10-12 headline indicators.

Germany has been in favour of a “political endorsement”. Indicators are not only inevitable for the monitoring process. They are an important communication tool, which brings the Strategy, as well as its achievements and failures, to the attention of the general public.

### **3. The global dimension and the security issue**

The EU-SDS will now be more closely linked to the national level. It should also be more closely linked to the international level - meaning the CSD process. Therefore we welcome the initiative of DG ENV to do so.

In addition we should take a closer look at the global dimension i.e. of climate change, resource management and biodiversity. The renewed strategy still focuses very much on EU level and should be better interlinked with the global partnership chapter.

Specific awareness and further focus should also be given to the horizontal integration of the environment-development-security policies. So far, neither the EU-SDS nor the European Security Strategy provide instruments for the policy management.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I said, Sustainable Development Strategies rarely hit the headlines.

We shouldn't care!

Sustainable development is the fundamental objective of the European Union and the guiding principle in many Member States. In the last 20 years we have created strategies and processes, where we can rely on.

In contrast, Climate Change is constantly in the headlines.

Although climate change is not the only key challenge of sustainable development, the Stern and IPCC reports provided not only momentum on climate change but also for sustainable development thinking. Why not try to achieve the same impulses for biodiversity?

The momentum was taken up by the German EU- and G8- Presidency and I think some things moved in the direction of sustainable development. But there is still a long and stony way to go to for implementation and changing behaviour. There is an African proverb, which says:

*"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."*

We want to go very far. Therefore we, the Europeans, should continue to take the lead and try to get as many countries as possible to follow us - not forgetting the citizens.